



February 19, 2009

Senator Jerry Black, Chairman
Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee

Dear Senator Black:

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Lora Wier and I'm a representative for the Montana Public Health Association (MPHA). I'm here today to provide support testimony for SB 424. MPHA works to promote policies that advance public health. We feel SB 424 is a sensible public health measure that will help to reduce the risk of mercury exposure in Montanans by preventing the release of the toxin from thermostats.

Because mercury is a reproductive toxin, and can be passed from mother to child through the placenta or breastfeeding, babies and children are especially vulnerable to mercury exposure, which can cause a wide array of neurological disorders. One in 6 women in the United States has high enough levels of mercury in their blood to put their infant at risk for mental disabilities and developmental delays. When applied to birth rates in Montana that means almost 2,000 babies are born each year at risk of neurological disorders from mercury exposure. Reducing the amount of human-caused releases of mercury to the environment will go a long way to protect public health. Targeting products that contain mercury, like thermostats, is part of the solution. Please vote yes on SB 424. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lora Wier".

Lora Wier